

March 26, 2013

Office of the Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Room TW-A325  
Washington, DC 20554

**In the Matter of: Nomination for the Universal Service Administrative Company Board of Directors, CC  
Docket Nos. 97-21 and 96-45**

The National Rural Health Resource Center (The Center) and the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) are nominating Mr. Kipman Smith, Executive Director of the Health Information Exchange of Montana ("HIEM"), to serve on the board of directors of the Universal Service Administrative Company ("USAC") Board of Directors pursuant to 97-21 and 96-45. Mr. Smith is being nominated to represent rural health care providers. The Center and NRHA are nominating Mr. Smith based on his extensive experience working in the health care industry in northwest and north central Montana, experience that includes most recently the successful deployment of a broadband network funded by federal universal service funds to serve exclusively rural health care facilities – including many tribal health facilities – across this remote region.

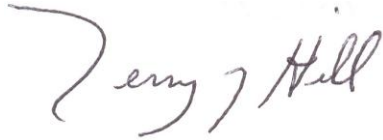
The HIEM is a not-for-profit collaboration of rural health care providers established to develop and share electronic health information and to improve patient care throughout a shared service area. This service area spans both sides of the Continental Divide and features difficult terrain, harsh and unpredictable weather, and sparse population. The Center and NRHA believe it is important for the perspective of the relatively small, very rural health providers such as those served by the HIEM to be represented on the USAC Board of Directors. The Center and NRHA believe Mr. Smith is uniquely qualified and capable to fulfill this role and has also been an active and well-respected member of the National Rural HIT Coalition and has spoken on behalf of both organizations at national conferences, workshops, and online seminars. I think you will see that Mr. Smith's credentials and background would add a vital role to the Universal Service Administrative Company Board of Directors.

The Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining and improving health care in rural communities. As the nation's leading technical assistance and knowledge center in rural health, The Center focuses on five core areas: performance improvement; health information technology; recruitment & retention; community health assessments; and, networking.

NRHA, a non-profit membership organization with over 20,000 members, is the only organization representing the full spectrum of rural health care interests nationwide. From small rural hospitals and clinics to individual health care practitioners to rural public health advocates, the NRHA works to bring all rural health care interests together in order to facilitate communication and education, and to create an inclusive network for rural health care advocacy at the federal level.

Please consider Mr. Smith as the representative for rural health care providers for the Universal Service Administrative Company Board of Directors. You will find him to be thorough and very capable to add a perspective that will be greatly appreciated by the Universal Services Committee. Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to write for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Terry Hill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Terry" and last name "Hill" clearly distinguishable.

Terry Hill, Executive Director  
National Rural Health Resource Center  
[thill@ruralcenter.org](mailto:thill@ruralcenter.org)

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Brock Slabach". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brock" and last name "Slabach" clearly distinguishable.

Brock Slabach, Sr. Vice President for Member Services  
National Rural Health Resource Center  
[bslabach@NRHArural.org](mailto:bslabach@NRHArural.org)